



WELCOME THE KING

THE BIRTH OF JESUS



ROOTED
IPHC KIDS' CURRICULUM
- EST. 2020 -

WELCOME THE KING

UNIT 12-WELCOME THE KING: THE BIRTH OF JESUS

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WELCOME THE KING

MONTHLY PREPARATION GUIDE

UNIT 12- PRE-K

“Blessed is the king of Israel.” (John 12:13) Each year Christmas offers us the chance to return our distracted gaze to Christ and worship the promised King. As you explore the stories of those who physically experienced the arrival of Christ, consider what it must have been like to worship Jesus in those moments. Then, help your children ponder, honor and celebrate Jesus’ birth – the King has come. Merry Christmas!

John 12:13b (NIV), “Blessed is the king of Israel.”

WEEK 1

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece, Game Cards, Timer, Cardstock (Christmas Colors or White), *Mary and Music* Images, Crayons or Markers, Scissors, Glue Sticks, Items for Decorating (ribbon, stickers, old Christmas cards, glitter glue, Christmas clipart, etc.)

WEEK 2

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece, Inflated Balloon, *The Shepherds Worship* Page, Candy Canes, Clear Tape, Crayons

WEEK 3

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece, Chopsticks, Skittles Candy, Napkins, Paper Plate, *Welcome Baby Jesus/ Thank You Jesus* Banner Cutouts, Tape

WEEK 4

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece, Wrapping Paper, Boxes of Noodles, Toys, Pasta Sauce, Paint Tubes, Seasoning Containers, Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh Props (optional), *Wise Men* Page, Wrapping Paper Squares (2.5" x 2.5"), Glue Sticks, Crayons

MARY SINGS FOR JOY

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 1: 39-42, 46-49 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

Welcome the newborn King.

FOCUS VERSE

“Blessed is the king of Israel.” John 12:13b (NIV)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Game Cards | Timer | Cardstock (Christmas Colors or White) | Mary and Music Images | Crayons or Markers | Scissors | Glue Sticks | Items for decorating (ribbon, stickers, old Christmas cards, glitter glue, Christmas clipart, etc.)

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What is your favorite ice cream flavor?
- What songs do you like to sing at Christmas?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Try something different today. If your kids are used to singing with music, try singing a hymn or chorus without accompaniment (a cappella). If they usually sing a cappella, invite a musician to help with a song or two.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Pray with your class. Ask them to raise their hands if they have a request.

SAMPLE PRAYER: *“Father God, we love You! Thank You for inviting us to worship You—and for helping us do it! Please help us to learn more about You today. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.”*

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “For the last few months, we have been learning a lot about God! We learned that God created how many things? (All things). We learned that God is kind, even when we disobey Him. We learned that God always takes care of us. We learned that God makes ordinary people extraordinary. And one of the most important things we learned is that God hears our prayers. Today we’re going to start talking a lot

about God's Son, Jesus, the True King. He saved the world, and our new lessons are all about how He came into the world as a baby and how we can Welcome the Newborn King. Now, who would like to put up the first puzzle piece for this month?"

TRANSITION: Say, "Let's play a game together before we read our story!"

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Colored Dot Stickers | Timer |

Say, "Today we're going to play a game called *Joy Tag*. Show the children the stickers. "Do you see these stickers? Does anyone know what word is on each sticker? It's JOY! Let's see how many people you can tag with your joy stickers! Are you ready to play?"

GAME GOAL: To be the team that tags the most people with their team's stickers.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Before class begins, write JOY on all of the stickers. Then, move the stickers around so that each sheet has only a single color of stickers. Cut the sheets in half.
2. Divide students into teams of equal size. Give a sticker sheet of the same color to each person on a team. For example, one team will only have blue stickers while another team will have only yellow stickers.
3. Set the timer for 30 seconds. When you say, "Go!" start the timer and have the children run around in an attempt to tag members from other teams with their colored stickers. (We recommend only tagging children on their backs to prevent stickers from being easily removed.)
4. When the timer is up, count the stickers of each color and designate the winner.
5. Play as many rounds as time allows.

TRANSITION: Say, "What kind of tag did we just play? Right! JOY Tag! Now, it's time to find out why that word, JOY, is so important for us today!"

LEARN — 10 MINUTES

Say, "When Mary had Baby Jesus in her belly, her cousin was also about to have a baby named John. One day, Mary went to visit her cousin, Elizabeth. Guess what?! When Elizabeth saw Mary, the baby in her belly jumped for joy! Then, Mary started to sing! Everyone was so happy that God was sending His Son, Jesus, to be born." Read Luke 1:39-42, 46-49 (ICB).

³⁹ Mary got up and went quickly to...Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the unborn baby inside Elizabeth jumped. Then Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² She cried out in a loud voice, "God has blessed you more than any other woman. And God has blessed the baby which you will give birth to... ⁴⁶ Then Mary said, "My soul praises the Lord; ⁴⁷ my heart is happy because God is my Savior. ⁴⁸ I am not important, but God has shown his care for me, his servant girl. From now on, all people will say that I am blessed, ⁴⁹ because the Powerful One has done great things for me. His name is holy.

Say, "Do you hear how Mary praises God? She is happy because she knows that God is sending Jesus the King, who will be strong, kind, and will save His people."

Ask, "I'm going to reread some of Mary's song, and when I'm finished will you tell me what part you like best?" (Read verses 46-49.) This story shows us one way we can worship. Mary was so excited that God was sending His King that she made up a song on the spot. If Mary can do that, I wonder if we could, too? Can you sing "thank you" to God for His love and **welcome the newborn King?**"



IF YOU'RE NOT SURE HOW TO START, TRY THIS SIMPLE SONG OF PRAISE TO THE ABC TUNE: "PRAISE YOU, FATHER, FOR YOUR SON! YOU'VE BEEN KIND TO EVERYONE! JESUS CAME FROM UP ABOVE. HE'S THE ONE WHO SHOWS YOUR LOVE. THANK YOU, LORD, FOR OUR GREAT KING! THANK YOU, LORD, FOR EVERYTHING!"

TRANSITION: Say, "Aren't you glad we can **welcome the newborn King** with songs of praise?"

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Let's talk a little more about our story and what it means."

1. Why do you think Mary felt like singing?

Response: Mary felt joy about the coming King, Jesus. She knew God was keeping His promise to send a King to His people. She also praises God because God has shown that He cares for her.

2. What makes you so happy you want to sing? Do you ever make up songs?

Response: Answers will vary, and remember, not everyone likes to sing. Remind children that God invites us to sing praises to Him as best we can.

3. Do you ever sing when you're sad or afraid?

Response: Maybe we should! Mary's song praises God because He is strong. Songs like "Jesus Loves Me" remind us that God is strong even when we are not.

4. We can also sing songs we know to welcome the King. What are some of your favorite Christmas songs about Jesus?

Response: If they are slower to answer, suggest Away in a Manger, O Little Town of Bethlehem, Joy to the World. Songs like Jesus Loves Me are also appropriate answers.

5. Do you have to wait until you're in church to sing to God?

Response: No! We can sing praises to God—songs that thank Him, tell Him how wonderful He is, and more—anytime.

6. What do we learn about God from this story?

Response: God sent His Son and made Him King. God loves us. God gives us joy. God is worthy of our worship, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great discussion! Let's do an activity to help us remember how Mary welcomed Jesus."

RESPOND — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Cardstock (Christmas Colors or White) | *Mary and Music* Images | Crayons or Markers |

Scissors | Glue Sticks | Items for decorating (ribbon, stickers, old Christmas cards, glitter glue, Christmas clipart, etc.)

Say, "Do you remember how joyful Mary was as she told her cousin, Elizabeth, that God was about to send His people a Savior? Mary was so excited that she started singing! Well, today, we're going to make a craft that reminds us of this moment. Let's get started."

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Give each child a piece of cardstock (or let them choose a color) and the *Mary and Music* images. (Cut these out before class begins.)
2. Have the children color the images.
3. At the top of their paper, write the words to Luke 1: 47: "my heart is happy because God is my Savior."
4. Then, help the children glue the pictures of Mary and the music notes on their paper.
5. Finally, have the kids decorate their pictures. Encourage them to make their creations look as joyful as possible. (Instead of sending them home, you could use the posters to decorate your classroom.)

TRANSITION: Say, "I love how happy Mary looks in all of your pictures! Great job! Who would like to share their craft and show us how you made it look joyful?"

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "It's time to learn our verse to welcome King Jesus! I'll read it first, and then we'll try it together!" Read the verse yourself, read it with them two or three times, then have them lead you.

"Blessed (praying hands) is the king (lifting of crown action) of Israel (point to everyone)." John 12:13 (NIV) (hold your hands out like a book)

CHALLENGE: If children struggle to repeat the verse, you might make this memory verse into a chant or song—or challenge your students to do it!

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

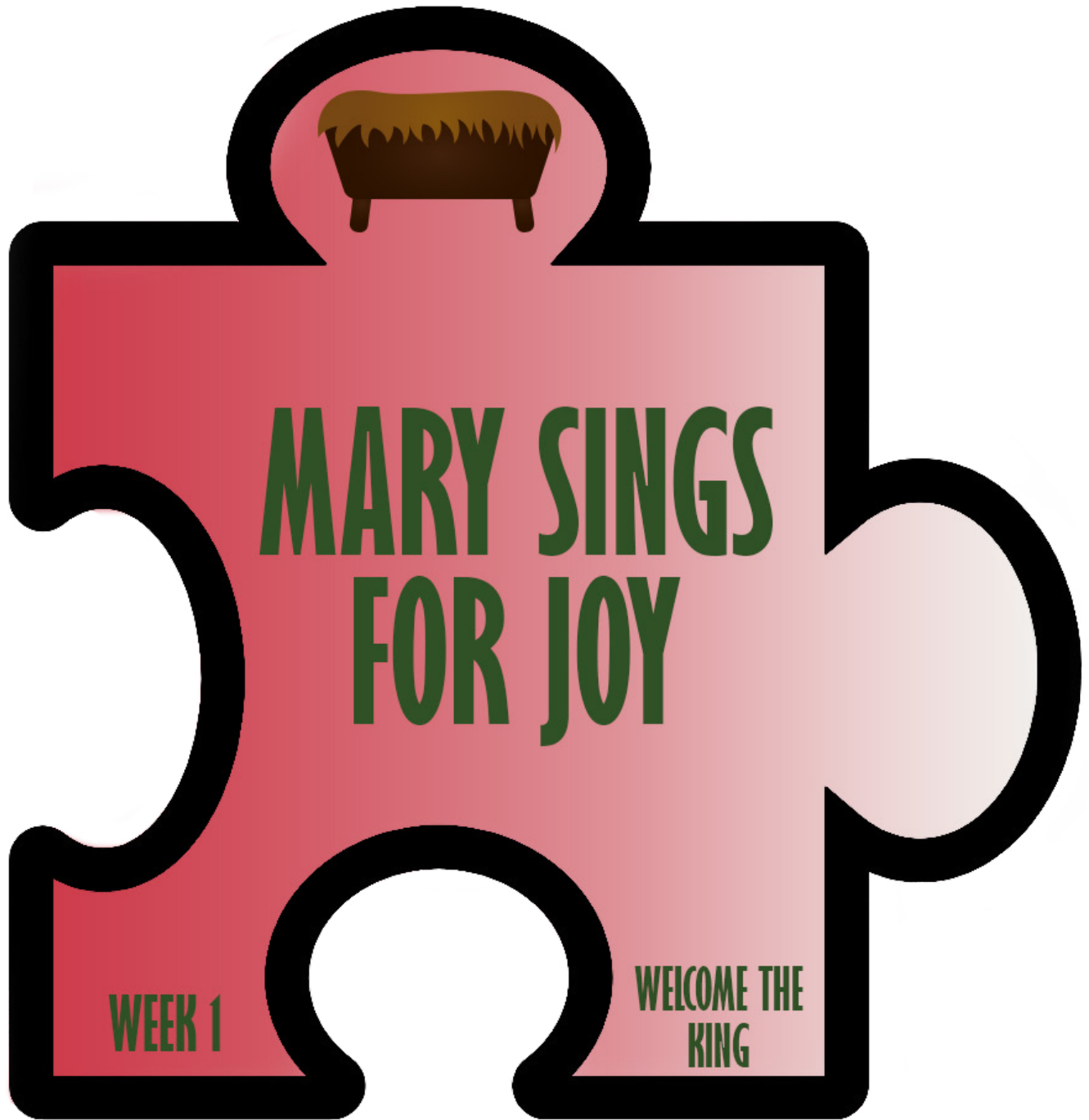
Say, "God invites us to welcome Jesus as King, just like Mary did. She knew that Jesus was God's only Son (John 3:16) and that God made Jesus King to make the world right. Share our song about Jesus with your family, and ask them their favorite song to **welcome the newborn King**. Let's pray!"

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"God, thank You for this Christmas season. Thank You for reminding us that Jesus came to be our King. Make us happy enough to sing, like Mary did."*

RELEASE — 5 MINUTES

If you have extra time before parents arrive, retell the story of Mary's visit to Elizabeth. Allow the children to ask questions or play group games to encourage cooperation and deepen relationships. When parents arrive to pick up their children, please give them a copy of the monthly Parent Guide (downloadable).





THE SHEPHERDS WORSHIP

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 2:8-12, 15-17, 20 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

Welcome the newborn King.

FOCUS VERSE

“Blessed is the king of Israel.” John 12:13 (NIV)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Inflated Balloon | *The Shepherds Worship* Page | Candy Canes | Clear Tape | Crayons |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What pancake topping do you like the most?
- If you could have any pet, what would you want?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Since this month's unit is focused on Jesus' birth, sing songs about welcoming and worshiping our King!

Here are some great options:

- “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”
- “Joy to the World”
- “Silent Night
- “O Come Let Us Adore Him”

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Pray together with your class.

SAMPLE PRAYER: “Jesus, we love You! We worship You because You gave us everything! Thank You for coming to Earth to save us. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “This is the second week in our Christmas unit, *Welcome the King*. Last week, we read about how John (the baby) jumped for joy inside His mother when Jesus entered the room. Did you know that John was the first person to **welcome the newborn King**? This week, we are talking about how some shepherds welcomed Jesus, our King, but first, let’s place our new puzzle piece on the wall.”

TRANSITION: Say, “Who is ready for game time?”

ENGAGE – 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Inflated balloon (1 per person) |

Say, “In today’s game we will try to get a balloon from one side of the room to the other. Who thinks they can do that really quickly?”



SOMETIMES A CHILD WILL NOT WANT TO PLAY THE GAME. DO NOT FORCE THEM TO PLAY BUT LEAVE THE INVITATION OPEN FOR THEM TO JUMP IN AT ANY POINT. KIDS WILL OFTEN JOIN WHEN THEY SEE OTHER CHILDREN HAVING FUN.

GAME GOAL: To work together to move a balloon from one side of the room to the other.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Space everyone arms-length apart on one side of the room.
2. Starting at one end of the room, give each person a balloon, and explain that they must walk the length of the room and back while keeping their balloon in the air.
3. See who can make it down and back the fastest without the balloon touching the ground.

(Remember to remind children they are playing for fun!)

CHALLENGE: To make the game harder, make a rule that says that the children can only touch the balloon with one part of their body—right hand, left elbow, feet, head, left knee, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, “Great job moving your balloon from one side of the room to the other. You work together so well! In today’s story, we will hear how a group of shepherds moved themselves across the fields from one side to another. Let’s read from God’s Word to find out more!”

LEARN – 10 MINUTES

Say, “Last week, we learned about how an unborn baby, named John, **welcomed the newborn King**, Jesus, by jumping for joy! This week, we are going to talk about the night when Jesus was born! Listen to how some ordinary shepherds **welcomed the newborn King**.” Read Luke 2:8-12, 15-17, 20 (ICB).



YOU MAY NEED TO EXPLAIN THE FOLLOWING TERMS BEFORE READING THE STORY: ANGEL OF GOD, SHEPHERD, FEEDING BOX, AND MANGER.

⁸ That night, some shepherds were in the fields nearby watching their sheep. ⁹ An angel of the Lord stood before them. The glory of the Lord was shining around them, and suddenly they became very frightened. ¹⁰ The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. ¹¹ Today your Savior was born in David's town. He is Christ, the Lord. ¹² This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a feeding box." ¹⁵...The shepherds said to each other, "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened. We will see this thing the Lord told us about. ¹⁶ So the shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph. ¹⁷ And the shepherds saw the baby lying in a feeding box. Then they told what the angels had said about this child. ²⁰ Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything that they had seen and heard. It was just as the angel had told them.

Say, "What an amazing story of how the shepherds **welcomed the newborn King!**"

Ask, "*Why did the shepherds praise God?* The shepherds praised God and thanked Him because they were able to **welcome the newborn King**, Jesus! Another way to say they praised and thanked God is that they worshiped. We do that every Sunday. Worshiping is a way that we welcome Jesus and tell Him how great He is. Did you notice how the shepherds worshiped Jesus? If the shepherds can welcome Jesus with worship, we can also **welcome the newborn King** with worship. Let's practice now!"



PAUSE AND GIVE THOSE WHO ARE WILLING AN OPPORTUNITY TO WORSHIP AND TELL GOD WHY THEY ARE THANKFUL TO HIM FOR SENDING JESUS.

TRANSITION: Say, "I am so grateful we can **welcome the newborn King** by worshiping like the shepherds."

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Let's talk about this worshipful story together."

1. Who should we welcome with worship?

Response: We should welcome Jesus with worship!

2. Tell me about a time you worshiped Jesus?

Response: Answers will vary.

3. Who told the shepherds how to find Jesus?

Response: The angels told them to look for a baby in a manger, wrapped in cloths, and lying in a feeding box.

4. When are sometimes you can welcome Jesus with worship?

Response: We can always tell God how thankful we are for Jesus! We can worship Him at church, when we are in the car, when we are listening to music about Him, when we are cleaning our rooms, when we are at a park, etc.

5. What is a way YOU can welcome Jesus at Christmas time?

Response: Answers will vary.

6. What did we learn about God today?

Response: God shared the good news with the shepherds, God gave us His Son, God made Jesus King, God loves His Son and us, God used angels to tell the good news, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great discussion! Let's do an activity to help us remember how the shepherds welcomed Jesus as King."

RESPOND — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *The Shepherds Worship* Page (1 per child) | Candy Canes (2 per child) | Clear Tape | Crayons |

Say, "Do you remember how the shepherds welcomed Jesus? Well, today, we are going to color a picture of the shepherds worshipping. We also get to put a staff (explain) in their hands to show that they are shepherds! Who is ready to get started?"

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Give each child a *The Shepherds Worship* Page and two candy canes.
2. Next, have the kids color the remainder of *The Shepherds Worship* Page.
3. Help the kids tape a candy cane to each shepherd's hand (two total candy canes).
 - Do not allow any child to eat the candy canes until they go home. You may not know about food allergies or if parents allow their kids to eat candy canes.

TRANSITION: Say, "The most important thing to remember from our story is that the shepherds welcomed the newborn King, and we have the opportunity to do the same thing. Jesus is worthy of being welcomed through worship."

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "Do you remember our memory verse from last week? It was pretty short, and it talked about how Jesus is King! Let's continue to practice the verse together. Who's ready to try it again?" Read the verse one time through with the actions and invite everyone else to join you the second time.



VERSE MEMORIZATION IS INCLUDED BECAUSE OUR KIDS MUST BE TAUGHT AND SHOWN THE VALUE OF THE WORD OF GOD.

"Blessed (praying hands) is the king (lifting of crown action) of Israel (point to everyone)." John 12:13 (NIV) (hold your hands out like a book)

CHALLENGE: Recite the verse by shouting the first word and then slowly decreasing your volume with each word until you are silent. Additionally, try it the opposite way. Start by whispering the first word in the verse and then slowly increase your volume until you are shouting the final word.

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "It is our joy to **welcome the newborn King** through worship. When Jesus came to live on earth, everything changed for the better! We celebrate Christmas because that is the time we remember Jesus' birth. Jesus' coming was GOOD NEWS!"

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"God, thank You for sending Jesus to save us. He is so amazing, and we want to get better at welcoming Him. Will You teach us how we can welcome and celebrate Jesus better? We love You. In Jesus' name, Amen."*



**DO NOT PUSH OFF OR IGNORE THIS PRAYER TIME AT THE END.
THE BEST WAY TO START AND END YOUR LESSON IS THROUGH
CONVERSATION WITH GOD.**

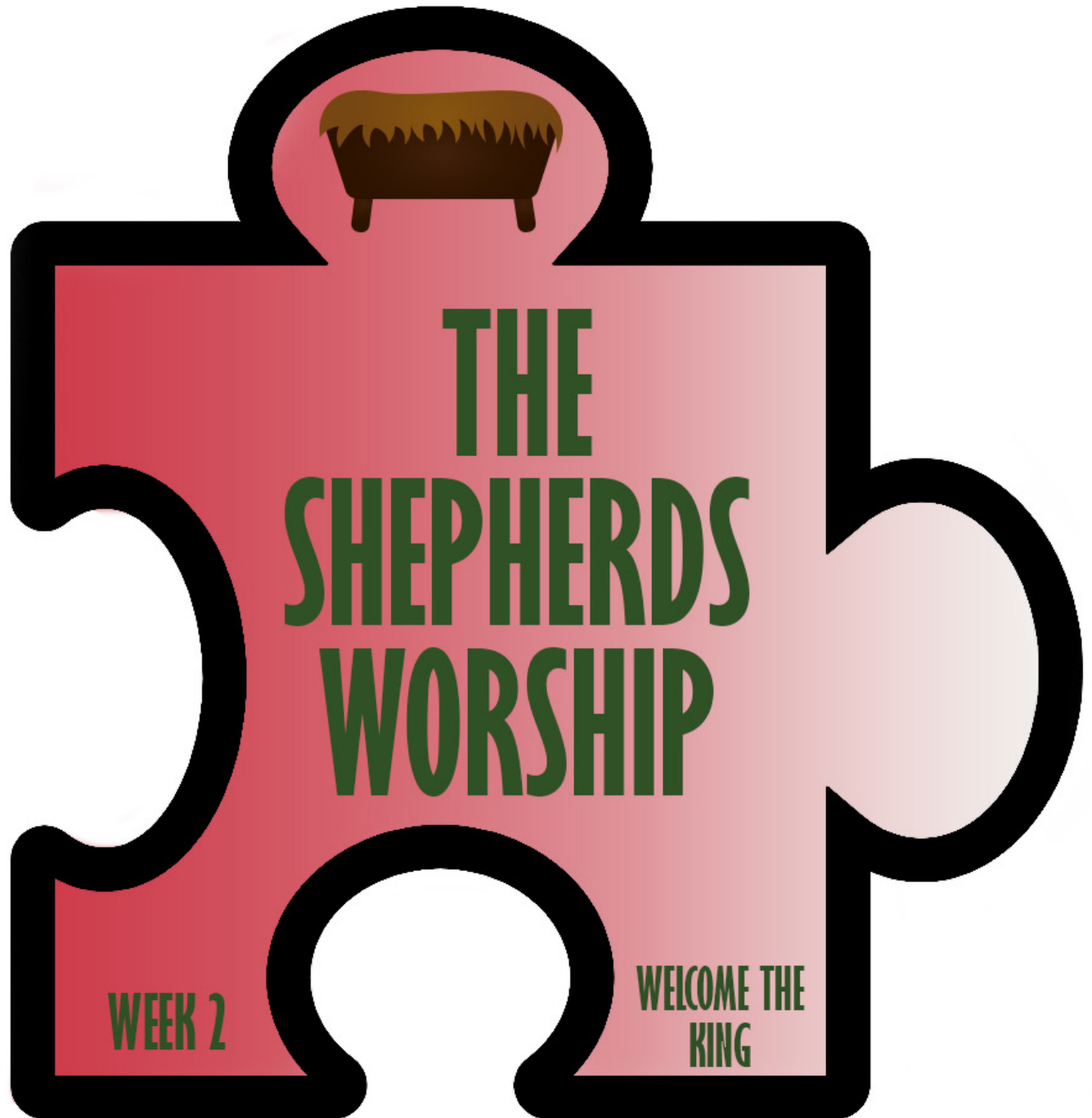
RELEASE — 5 MINUTES

If there is extra time before parents arrive, retell or act out the story, replay the engagement game, or sing more worship songs to close your time together. Any of these options would be great activities to end your time together.

THE SHEPHERDS WORSHIP



WELCOME THE NEWBORN KING
WITH WORSHIP



SIMEON THANKS GOD

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 2:25-33 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

Welcome the newborn King.

FOCUS VERSE

“Blessed is the king of Israel.” John 12:13 (NIV)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | | Chopsticks | Skittles Candy | Napkins | Paper Plate | Chopsticks | *Welcome Baby Jesus/Thank You Jesus Banner Cutouts* (1 set per student)| Tape |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What is your favorite game to play?
- If you could ride in one vehicle, would you choose a train, a car, or a plane?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

One way that children learn is by repetition, so repeat a few carefully chosen songs each week. Rotate among several that connect with the unit's theme. The more you sing together, the more your students will retain and understand what you're teaching.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Pray with your class. Encourage them to participate in prayer, but don't force them. Even if they say only a few words, they can learn to talk to God in prayer.

SAMPLE PRAYER: *“Father God, thank You for inviting us to give You thanks—and for helping us do it! Help us learn all You will teach us. We pray in His name, Amen.”*

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “In our lessons this month, we are learning how we can welcome the newborn King. Do you remember how Mary welcomed the King? [with a song] And how about the shepherds? How did they welcome the baby Jesus? [with praise] Today, we meet another person who welcomes the newborn King.

Who will place this week's puzzle piece and introduce us to this week's worshiper?"

TRANSITION: Say, "Now, let's play a game together before we read about Simeon!"

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Chopsticks (1 per student-these will also be used during the craft) | Skittles Candy (1 bag per class) | Napkins (1 per student) | Paper Plate (1 per class) |



TODAY'S ACTIVITY ENDS WITH A CANDY TREAT. PLEASE CHECK WITH PARENTS BEFORE CLASS BEGINS TO VERIFY THAT NONE OF THE CHILDREN HAVE ALLERGIES TO ANYTHING IN THE CANDY.

Say, "Today we're going to play the *Thankful Game!* Who's thankful for candy? I know I am. This game will use Skittles to remind us to be thankful for many different things."

GAME GOAL: To pick up a Skittle using chopsticks and to name different things for which you're thankful.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Allow the students to practice using their chopsticks.
2. Pour the Skittles on the paper plate.
3. Allow the first student to pick up a piece of candy using their chopsticks. (This is harder than it looks.)
4. Have the student tell the class something they are thankful for based on the color of the Skittle they choose.
 - a. RED: Name a Person you are thankful for
 - b. ORANGE: Name a Place you are thankful for
 - c. YELLOW: Name a Food you are thankful for
 - d. GREEN: Name an item that starts with the first letter of your name that you are thankful for
 - e. BLUE: Name anything of your choice
5. Allow each student a turn and repeat as time allows.
6. Allow the students to enjoy the candy at the end.



TO AVOID SPREADING GERMS, POUR A FEW SKITTLES ONTO A NAPKIN FOR EACH CHILD INSTEAD OF HAVING THEM REACH INTO THE GROUP PILE.

TRANSITION: Say, "That was pretty sweet. Do you know what else is pretty sweet? Reading God's Word and learning about Him. Let's dive into the story of Simeon in the book of Luke."

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

Say, "The story we'll read today happened just a week after Jesus was born. Let's see what happened when Simeon met the baby Jesus and learn another way that we can welcome the newborn King." Luke 2:25-33 (ICB).

²⁵ A man named Simeon lived in Jerusalem. He was a good man and very religious (or faithful to God). He was waiting for the time when God would help Israel [by sending Jesus]. The Holy Spirit was in him. ²⁶ The Holy Spirit told Simeon that he would not die before he saw the Christ [Jesus] promised by the Lord. ²⁷ The Spirit led Simeon to the Temple. Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus to the Temple to do what the law said they must do. ²⁸ Then Simeon took the baby [up] in his arms and thanked God:

³⁰ “I have seen your Salvation with my own eyes.

³¹ You prepared him before all people.

³² He is a light for the non-Jewish people to see.
He will bring honor to your people.”

³³ Jesus’ father and mother were amazed at what Simeon had said about him.

Say, “How does Simeon welcome the King? He thanks God (verse 28)! He knows that God has kept his promise. Simeon says, ‘I have seen your Salvation with my own eyes.’ Simeon believes that Jesus is the King! So Simeon thanks God for keeping His promises—to Simeon and all of His people, even us! Simeon gave thanks. Can you? When do you say thank you?”



ALLOW STUDENTS TO SHARE ABOUT A TIME WHEN THEY USUALLY GIVE THANKS. THEY MIGHT MENTION CHRISTMAS, BIRTHDAY PRESENTS, OR THANKSGIVING. GUIDE THEM TO THINK OF GIFTS, OF HOME, FAMILY, CREATION, AND MORE. AND IF THEY HAVEN’T MENTIONED IT BY THE END, SUGGEST GIVING THANKS FOR JESUS!

TRANSITION: Say, “This is another way we worship God—to simply say thank You to God for all His good gifts to us.”

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, “Now, let’s take one more look at Simeon to see what else we can learn.”

1. Who do we welcome?

Response: We **welcome the newborn King**, Jesus!

2. Do you always remember to say thank you? Why do you forget?

Response: Answers will vary. We don’t always feel thankful. We may think we deserve good things, but the Bible says all good things are gifts from God (James 1:17).

3. Simeon listens to what God says. Can we hear God’s voice?

Response: Yes! Simeon trusts God’s promises—we have those in the Bible. One of the most important ways we hear God’s voice is by listening to His Word. Simeon also feels God has promised him something, and he patiently waits for God to keep that promise. We can pray that God will fill us with the Holy Spirit too.

4. Why do you think Mary and Joseph were “amazed” by what Simeon said?

Response: Answers will vary.

5. What are some things you will give thanks for this week?

Response: Answers will vary. Guide them to thank God for gathering His people in worship.

6. What do we learn about God from our story?

Response: God keeps His promises. God sent Jesus the King. God loves you.

TRANSITION: Say, "I'm so glad we get to **welcome the newborn King** every Christmas!"

RESPOND — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Chopsticks (1 per student) | *Welcome Baby Jesus Banner Cutouts* (1 set per student) | Tape (pieces per student) |

Say, "Let's celebrate and show Jesus how thankful we are for Him! And what better way to celebrate than to eat cake! Well, we're not able to eat cake today, but we are going to create a cake topper to **Welcome the Newborn King**. You can take it home and add it to the next cake you eat with your family."

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Give each student a *Welcome Baby Jesus Banner Cutout*.
2. The students will color the banners.
3. Using scissors, the students will cut out the banner.
4. Next, help the students attach the banner to their chopsticks. Use a small piece of tape to secure the end of the banner to the top of one chopstick.
5. Then, roll the paper around the chopstick. Stop at the halfway point of the banners.
6. Repeat this process with the other end of the banners using the second chopstick.
7. Once you have completed the craft, have the students roll out the banners and pretend to through a party to celebrate the arrival of baby Jesus.

OPTIONAL: If this activity is too challenging for your children, purchase a large poster board and write "Welcome Baby Jesus" on it. Then, have the children use markers, crayons, and other craft supplies to decorate the sign. Then, hang it in your classroom as a reminder that we are welcoming the King with our lives!

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job, everyone! You know how to celebrate! Be sure to celebrate with your family at home and make Jesus welcome in your home."

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "It's time to say our verse to welcome the newborn King! I'll read it first, and then we'll try it together!" Read the verse yourself, read it with the students two or three times, then have them lead you.

"Blessed (praying hands) is the king (lifting of crown action) of Israel (point to everyone)." John 12:13 (NIV) (hold your hands out like a book)

CHALLENGE: Have the students say the words as you perform the motions. Mix things up after a few correct performances and use the wrong actions and let the students correct you. Finish by completing it correctly together.


REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "God invites us to welcome Jesus as King, just like Simeon did. Simeon knew Jesus was the King God had promised, so he welcomed Him with open arms and a big thanks! You can do that too. Jesus came to be *everyone's* King, and He can be yours too. Let's pray!"

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"God, thank You for Jesus. He's the King You promised Your people! Help us to be like Simeon, trusting and obeying You. We love You. Amen."*

RELEASE — 5 MINUTES

If you have extra time before parents arrive, help students imagine what Simeon must have felt when he met Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. How would Mary and Joseph tell the story? Allow the children to ask questions or play group games to encourage cooperation and deepen relationships.



WELCOME BABY JESUS!



THE WISE MEN GIVE GIFTS

BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11

BIG IDEA

Welcome the newborn King.

FOCUS VERSE

“Blessed is the king of Israel.” John 12:13 (NIV)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Wrapping Paper | Boxes of Noodles | Toys | Jars of Pasta Sauce | Paint Tubes | Seasoning Containers | Gold Prop (Optional) | Frankincense Prop (Optional) | Myrrh Prop (Optional) | *Wise Men* Page | 2.5"x2.5" Wrapping Paper Squares | Glue Sticks | Crayons |



THE BOX OF NOODLES, TOYS, PASTA SAUCE, PAINT TUBES, AND SEASONING CONTAINERS NEED TO BE WRAPPED IN WRAPPING PAPER BEFORE THE LESSON BEGINS. SEE THE ENGAGE SECTION FOR MORE INFORMATION.

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- Did you travel anywhere for Christmas break? If so, where did you go?
- Which Christmas songs do you like to sing?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Authentic worship comes from the heart. Sometimes when we sing, we do not really mean the words or are not thinking about what we are saying. Discuss this with your children by reading aloud a phrase from one of the songs you will be singing today. Then, ask the children what they think the words mean. This activity is another way to prepare their hearts for worship.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Pray together with your class giving newer children a chance to pray, if they are comfortable.



DEVELOPING A CONSISTENT PRAYER LIFE IS SO IMPORTANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. GIVE YOUR CLASS MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES A DAY TO PRACTICE PRAYING.

SAMPLE PRAYER: “God, You are so great! Thank You for loving us enough to give us Jesus. Open our eyes to see Your loving kindness to us in our story today. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “This entire month, we have looked at how we can **welcome the newborn King**, Jesus. Do you remember when we talked about baby John jumping for joy, the shepherds worshiping, and Simeon lifting up Jesus? We have learned a lot, haven’t we? This week, we will read about one more way we can practice welcoming Jesus, the newborn King! Before we get to that, let’s put up this week’s puzzle piece.”

TRANSITION: Say, “You know what time it is! It is time to play a game that will get us ready for our story! Are you ready to see what game we will be playing?”

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Gift Wrap (1 roll per class) | Box of Noodles (1 per team) | Toy (1 per team) | Jar of Pasta Sauce (1 per team) | Paint Tube (1 per team) | Seasoning Container (1 per team) |



WRAP THE ITEMS BEFORE CLASS BEGINS.

Say, “The name of today’s game is *Guess the Gifts*. Let’s work together to guess what is inside each gift!”

GAME GOAL: To correctly “guess the gifts” by shaking, feeling, and observing each wrapped gift.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Gather everyone in a circle facing each other.
2. Place all of the wrapped gifts in the middle of the circle.
3. One at a time, pass a gift around the circle and have each child guess what they think it is.
4. After everyone has guessed, choose a child who has exhibited good behavior to open the present, revealing what is inside.



IF YOU ARE HAVING A HARD TIME WITH CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT, TELL THE CLASS THAT ONLY THE CHILDREN WHO ARE FOLLOWING THE RULES WILL BE CHOSEN TO OPEN THE GIFTS.

5. Continue this process until all gifts have been guessed and opened.

MODIFICATION: If you have too many children in your class, it may be easier to have two circles instead of one.

TRANSITION: Say, “Great job playing *Guess the Gifts*! Today’s story will be about gifts too, but these gifts were given to a VERY special person. Let’s read about it!”

LEARN — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Gold Prop (Optional) | Frankincense Prop (Optional) | Myrrh Prop (Optional) |



USE THE PROPS FROM THE MATERIALS LIST TO HELP YOU TELL THE STORY.

Say, "This week's story happened when Jesus was about one year old. He was still a little baby! God sent some wise (smart) men to **welcome the newborn King**, Jesus! These men were so smart that people trusted them to explain the stars in the sky! They sound smart, huh? Let's find out what gifts these wise men brought to Jesus to welcome Him." Read Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11 (ICB).

¹ Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea during the time when Herod was king. After Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem.

² They asked, "Where is the baby who was born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east. We came to worship him."

⁹ The wise men heard the king and then left. They saw the same star they had seen in the east. It went before them until it stopped above the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy. ¹¹ They went to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshiped the child. They opened the gifts they brought for him. They gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Say, "What a great story of how to **welcome the newborn King!**"

Ask, "What did the wise men give to Jesus? The wise men gave Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh! Did you know that frankincense and myrrh come from trees? When they are taken from these special trees, they are burned for their smell. (Compare frankincense and myrrh to candles). Both frankincense and myrrh were very expensive during Jesus' lifetime and were only owned by the people with lots of money. Now, we can **welcome the newborn King** by giving Jesus gifts too! Just because we cannot see Jesus that does not mean we cannot give Him gifts."



SAY, "ONE OF THE BEST GIFTS WE CAN GIVE JESUS IS OUR LOVE. WE CAN GIVE JESUS OUR LOVE BY TALKING TO HIM, SINGING TO HIM, AND THINKING ABOUT HIM. CAN WE ALL CLOSE OUR EYES AND TELL JESUS THAT WE LOVE HIM IN OUR MINDS? GREAT JOB! LET'S DO IT OUT LOUD NOW!"

TRANSITION: Say, "I am so grateful that we can **welcome the newborn King** by giving Jesus our gifts!"

DISCUSS – 10 MINUTES

Say, "Let's talk about this great story together."

1. Who did the wise men welcome with gifts?

Response: They welcomed Jesus with gifts.

2. We cannot see Jesus. What is the best gift we can give Him?

Response: The best gift we can give Jesus is our love.

3. How did the wise men know where Jesus was?

Response: The wise men followed a special star that God put in the sky.

4. You probably would not give someone gold, frankincense, or myrrh, would you? What special gift would you have given Jesus if you had been one of the wise men?

Response: Answers will vary.

5. Do you remember our game about guessing gifts? What does that game have to do with our story about the wise men?

Response: We played *Guess the Gifts* to help us remember that the wise men gave gifts to Jesus, our King.

6. What did we learn about God today?

Response: God gave us His Son, God brought men from far away to worship Jesus, God made Jesus King, God loves His Son and loves us, God used a star to help the wise men find Jesus, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great discussion! Let's do an activity to help us remember what the wise men taught us to **welcome the newborn King**, Jesus!"

RESPOND — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Wise Men* Page | 2.5"x2.5" Wrapping Paper Squares (3 per child) | Glue Sticks | Crayons |



BEFORE CLASS BEGINS, CUT SMALL SQUARES OF WRAPPING PAPER TO MATCH THE SIZE OF THE GIFTS ON THE GIFT WORKSHEET (2.5" BY 2.5")

Say, "Do you remember how the wise men welcomed Jesus? Yes, they gave Him gifts! Well, we're going to put all of the wise men's gifts (gold, frankincense, and myrrh) into presents. Let me show you what I mean."

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Give each child a *Wise Men* Page, three wrapping paper squares, a glue stick, and crayons.
2. Have the kids color the wise men's gifts first.
3. After the children have colored the entire *Wise Men* Page, help them glue down **ONLY** one side of the wrapping paper squares.
 - Each present should be able to be lifted on one side of the wrapping paper to uncover and re-cover the wise men's gifts again.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job with your gifts! Who can tell the class what they learned today? Does anyone want to retell the story to the class? Great! The most important thing to remember is that we can **welcome the newborn King** like the wise men did—with a gift. However, our gift is a gift of love. I am so grateful Jesus is our King, and that we get to welcome Him."

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "This is the last day we will practice this month's verse that reminds us to **welcome the newborn King**! I'm going to miss practicing this verse. Who thinks they can remember what our verse says? Great! Let's say it all together!"

"Blessed (praying hands) is the king (lifting of crown action) of Israel (point to everyone)." John 12:13 (NIV) (hold your hands out like a book)

CHALLENGE: Have the kids stand up and recite this verse like they are announcing it to the world.

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "We get to **welcome the newborn King**, just like the wise men did, by offering Jesus a gift! Although we cannot give Jesus a wrapped gift, we can give Him the best gift of all—our love! Did you know that church is not the only place where you can love Jesus? You can welcome Jesus with love at home using what you learned this month. You can jump for joy (John), worship by thanking God for sending Jesus (Shepherds), lift the name of Jesus with words (Simeon), and give Him the gift of love (wise men). Let's pray that God will help us love Him more and more each day!"

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Jesus, You are amazing! Help us to love You with all of our hearts. Thank You for loving us first. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

RELEASE — 5 MINUTES

If there is extra time before parents arrive, review the story again, play a game using the memory verse, or act out the story. Do not waste any of the time you have with the children; every moment is valuable.

THE WISE MEN GIVE GIFTS



